

the reservation one summer night. One of them raped her, Brunner said.

It was the real-life version of author Louise Erdrich's acclaimed fictional account of the rape of an Ojibwe woman by a non-Indian in her 2012 book, "The Round House." In both the real and the unrelated fictional case, the new congressional authority would not give the tribe jurisdiction to arrest and prosecute the suspects, because they were not previously known to the victim.

Last week, inside her home on the frigid White Earth Nation, which was dotted by vast snowy cornfields and hundreds of frozen lakes, Brunner brought out a colorful watercolor she had painted of three native women standing in the woods under a glowing full moon. The painting was the inspiration for the title of Nagle's play, she said, but it's also a metaphor for the new law.

"We have always known that non-Indians can come onto our lands and they can beat, rape and murder us and there is nothing we can do about it," Brunner said. "Now, our tribal officers have jurisdiction for the first time to do something about certain crimes."

"But," she added, "it is just the first sliver of the full moon that we need to protect us."

GI EDUCATION BENEFITS FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I introduced a bill this week that would fix a small problem with the Post-9/11 GI bill that is creating big problems for some servicemember and veteran families.

In 2010, SFC Angela Dees sent her son, Christopher Webb, to the University of Illinois at Chicago after receiving approval from DOD that she could transfer her GI benefits to pay for his education.

Dees first enlisted in the Army in 1998. At the time, she was married, and Christopher was her stepson. But after a divorce, she went to court and obtained sole legal custody, raising him from a 2-year-old into a young man. Since she never formally adopted him he was legally considered her ward.

But no matter how you slice it, Angela Dees is Chris's mother, and he is her son.

But halfway through Chris's first year at UIC, he received a letter from the VA telling him that he could no longer use his mother's GI benefits. The letter explained that he needed to repay the first year's benefits, \$30,000.

What happened?

It turns out they were caught in a bureaucratic wrinkle with enormous implications for this family. Foster children and legal wards like Chris are considered dependents by the Department of Defense, but not by the VA.

Servicemembers can pass along their GI Bill benefits to their spouses or children if they re-up for 4 more years. So Angela did that. In good faith, she signed an Army contract for 4 more years so that she could give her son a college education.

But the left hand of government did not know what the right hand of government was doing. So when it came time for the VA to pay Chris's tuition bill, VA said no. In their case, neither of them had the money to repay the VA, so Chris had to drop out of school and get a job in order to pay it back.

According to DOD, at least 25 students are in the same boat—approved by DOD, they enrolled in school only to have their benefits revoked by the VA when the bill came due.

It is an expensive bureaucratic nightmare for these families, and it should be fixed.

The Post-9/11 GI bill is the most comprehensive education benefits package for servicemembers since 1944. It was the first time we granted servicemembers the opportunity to transfer some or all of their earned benefits to family members.

But in this small way it is clear that the benefit does not match our intent.

The GI Education Benefits Fairness Act, S. 2014, will fix that.

This bill is very simple: it will align the definition of an "eligible child" at the DOD and the VA so that wards and foster children also qualify, and it will offer retroactive payment to those whose benefits were revoked because of the original discrepancy.

The bill has the support of many veteran and military advocacy groups: the Military Officers Association of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Student Veterans of America, the National Military Family Association, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Association of the United States Navy, and the Foster Parent Association of America.

In the House, Representatives BILL FOSTER and CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS are leading a companion bill in a bipartisan effort.

These servicemembers have made good on their obligations to our country. And the GI Education Benefits Fairness Act allows us to make good on the promises we have made to them.

I hope my colleagues will join me in support of this important bill.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I wish to discuss the circumstances many unemployed families face.

Millions of Americans have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and now face serious financial consequences.

Many families are having trouble paying the rent or their mortgage, or they are struggling to buy necessities for their children.

On February 6, the Senate voted, again, to try to extend unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed who are down on their luck.

But we still fell one vote short. We needed one more Republican.

I hope one of my colleagues on the Republican side will join us soon to get that legislation over the top and help folks who have been hurting since the first of the year. Getting this benefit extended is only one of the problems that unemployed families have faced in my State.

Thousands of unemployed Floridians have had their benefits delayed by flaws in the State's new automated unemployment system.

The website is called "Florida CONNECT."

But ironically it has left many Floridians disconnected.

We started hearing about some of the problems people were facing soon after the website was launched late last year.

When I started hearing about these reports, I asked U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez to investigate.

And I am pleased to report that the Department of Labor is now working with the State to sort out who should be getting their checks.

I am told most of the people who were stuck in this mess have either started getting the benefits they deserve or have received a letter directing them to a human being they can talk to and resolve possible problems with their applications.

I trust that the State of Florida will hold anyone responsible for that flawed website completely accountable for this mess.

In the meantime I hope that we here in the Congress will do our part to help folks that are down and out and pass the extension of benefits for long-term unemployed.

THE SOCHI OLYMPICS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as we speak, the 22nd Winter Olympics are well under way in Sochi, Russia.

Let me first congratulate the organizers on a fantastic opening ceremony. It really was something to see the depth and breadth of Russia's rich history and culture on display for the entire world to admire.

The Olympics put a powerful spotlight on Russia—a spotlight Russia's president has so vigorously sought. But just as this attention is educating the world about Russia's invaluable contributions to music, science, and sport, it is also highlighting the gaps between Russia's previous commitment to fundamental freedoms and the reality on the ground.

There is no question that in recent years we have seen Russia move towards a less open, less pluralistic society. But we cannot lose hope yet. Change is possible and Russia's beleaguered but tenacious civil society offers much hope for the future. We continue to expect Russia's leadership to uphold basic and universal human rights. Now there are other countries where the situation is much worse, but Russia is a powerful global example and should be committed to upholding fundamental freedoms much like Germany or the United Kingdom, its European neighbors. But unlike those governments, Russia's current leadership wantonly violates international commitments and seems bent on trying to redefine a settled consensus on the universality of human rights. We cannot let that go unchallenged.

Much has been said about Russia's 2013 law prohibiting so-called gay propaganda. Some have pointed to the fact